

Title: Marine Mammal and Marine Ecosystem Conservation

Purpose: The U.S. Marine Mammal Commission is currently evaluating pre-proposals for research and related activities that will **further the conservation and management goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act**. The intent is to support focused efforts that will supplement rather than supplant the research efforts of other agencies and organizations.

The evaluation process will occur in two steps. The first step will involve submission and evaluation of **pre-proposals**. The second will involve submission and evaluation of full proposals **only from investigators who have been notified that their pre-proposals have been accepted**. In the recent past, the Commission has provided support for approximately 50 percent of the proposals received. That percent may decline in 2004, depending on the number of proposals submitted and the availability of funding. Past projects supported by the Commission generally have ranged from \$5,000 to \$40,000. Proposals can budget for more than one year of work, but support will be provided on a yearly basis and cannot be guaranteed for more than a single year. Recipients of funding are welcome to submit additional proposals for funding in subsequent years. The Commission reserves the right to award a limited number of contracts, to limit the awards to a certain number of subject areas, and to limit the dollar amount of any award. Contractors whose projects involve the taking of marine mammals will be expected to obtain all necessary permits and authorizations for their projects before engaging in such activities.

Commission priorities, selection criteria, formats for pre- and full proposals, the submission process, and the submission schedule are described below.

Priorities: The Commission will consider proposals that address diverse issues relevant to marine mammals and associated marine ecosystem research and conservation. The Commission will give priority to projects that address the following general subject areas:

- The ecology of killer whales in the North Pacific Ocean and, in particular, the potential impact of killer whale predation on endangered marine mammal species or stocks;
- The efficacy of research, management, and recovery efforts for endangered, threatened, and depleted species;
- Methods for predicting, monitoring, and mitigating human activities that adversely affect marine mammals or their habitat;
- Detection of important conservation issues for marine mammals, including identification or clarification of units of conservation (e.g., species subspecies, stocks); and
- Methods for minimizing potentially harmful direct interactions between human activities and growing or recovering marine mammal populations.

Pre-proposal selection criteria: Pre-proposals will be evaluated by members of the Marine Mammal Commission staff and a subcommittee of the Commission's Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals. The following factors will be considered in reviewing pre-proposals:

- Likelihood of furthering important conservation purposes under the Marine Mammal Protection Act;
- General reasonableness of expected costs;
- Whether proposed projects are pertinent to key conservation efforts or will lead to new perspectives on means to achieve the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act;

- Past success on similar projects conducted by the principal investigators; and
- Completeness of the pre-proposal.

Pre-proposal format: Pre-proposals are limited to two pages in normal font (12 point). Each pre-proposal should include the following:

- Title of project;
- Names of applicant(s) and likely co-investigators;
- Description of conservation problem or issue being addressed;
- General approach to be used;
- Expected products;
- Expected cost and time frame; and
- Funding in hand or being sought elsewhere, if applicable.

Do not send supportive material or additional documents of any kind. Investigators will be notified by e-mail as to whether their pre-proposal has been accepted. Investigators whose pre-proposals have been accepted will be invited to submit a full proposal.

Selection criteria for full proposals: Full proposals should be submitted only after an investigator has been notified that his or her pre-proposal has been accepted. These proposals will be evaluated using the normal consultative process of the Marine Mammal Commission with its Committee of Scientific Advisors on Marine Mammals and Commission staff. The following factors will be considered in reviewing full proposals:

- Likelihood of furthering important conservation purposes under the Marine Mammal Protection Act;
- Adequacy of scientific design for achieving study objectives;
- Reasonableness of expected costs relative to study design and objectives;
- Whether and to what extent proposed projects will provide key information for conservation efforts or lead to new perspectives on means to achieve the goals of the Marine Mammal Protection Act;
- Past success on similar projects conducted by the principal investigators; and
- Completeness of the proposal.

Full proposal format:

Investigators who are invited to submit a full proposal should use the following format. We strongly encourage investigators to limit full proposals to no more than six pages; however, proposals up to ten pages in length will be accepted.

Names—Investigators' names and e-mail addresses for contact.

Abstract—Provide an abstract of the proposal summarizing the problem or question to be addressed, the method to be used to address the problem or question, possible outcomes of the work, and the utility of the research for advancing science and management related to marine mammals. Please limit the abstract to approximately 200 words.

Introduction, Background, or Problem Statement—Provide a brief description of the

issue or problem to be addressed. What is the problem and why is the research important?

Goals and Objectives—Provide a statement of the general or broad goal of the proposed research and specific objectives that will be addressed to achieve that goal.

Methods—Provide a detailed description of the methods of the investigation so that the reviewer can understand how you will address each of the specific objectives. If you are testing a null hypothesis, describe the power of your method to detect a significant alternative hypothesis. If your work is largely descriptive, provide a perspective on the completeness of your study in terms of providing a full description of the activity or behavior being described. For example, if you are studying movement patterns using satellite-linked telemetry, describe the completeness of your study in terms of potential sources of variation in those movement patterns (e.g., site of origin, year, season, size/age/sex class).

Possible Outcomes—Describe the outcomes that you think are possible or likely.

Research and Management Implications—Describe the implications of the various outcomes for further research or management of your subject species or, if appropriate, other species, the ecosystem, etc.

Project Evaluation—Describe how you will assess the success of your study.

Products—Describe the anticipated products of your study (papers, talks, guidelines, etc.)

Budget and Time Line—Describe your budget and time line, providing sufficient detail so that the reviewer is informed of expenses or costs by general category (salary, equipment, supplies, travel, publication, overhead, miscellaneous). Include information on other sources of funding for the project, if applicable.

Research Team Qualifications—Provide a brief description (i.e., paragraph) of the principal investigators for the project, including their experience or expertise related to the subject proposal. Include full contact information for all principal investigators, including mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, and e-mail address. Do not send full CVs.

Submission process: Pre-proposals should be sent to Timothy J. Ragen, Scientific Program Director, at the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission. Electronic submission to tragen@mmc.gov is preferred. Submissions may also be sent by mail (4340 East-West Highway, Room 905, Bethesda MD, 20814) or fax (301-504-0099).

Timing of submission and review process:

4 June 2004; 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.	Deadline for pre-proposal submission.
14 June 2004; 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.	Notification sent to successful pre-proposal applicants.
13 July 2004; 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.	Full proposals due to the Marine Mammal Commission.
30 July 2004; 5:00 P.M. E.S.T.	Successful applicants informed of final decisions.

Inquiries: Inquiries should be directed to Timothy J. Ragen (tragen@mmc.gov, 301-504-0087).